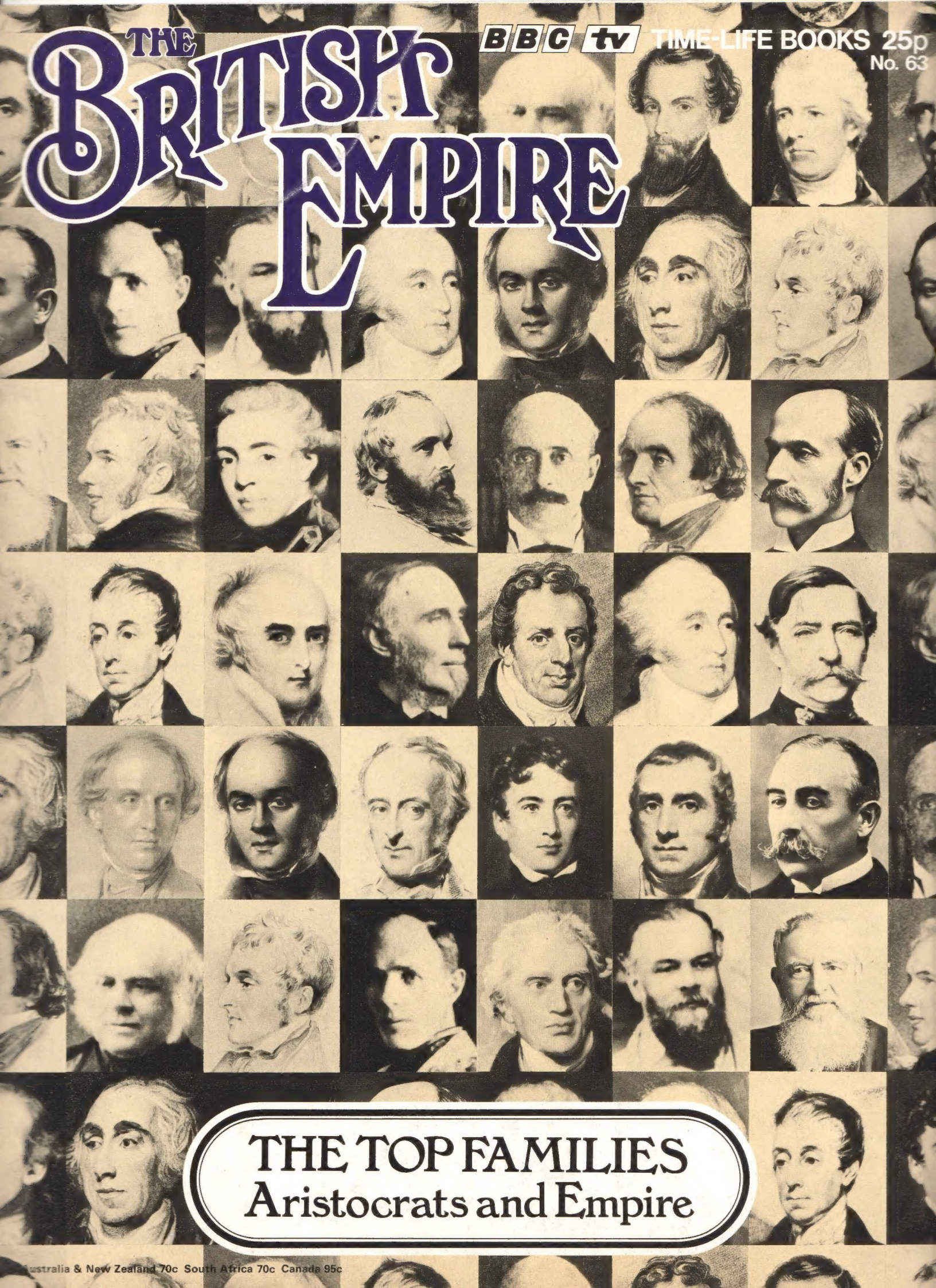


THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BBC tv TIME-LIFE BOOKS 25p
No. 63

THE TOP FAMILIES
Aristocrats and Empire

Australia & New Zealand 70c South Africa 70c Canada 95c

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BBC tv TIME-LIFE BOOKS 25p
No. 63

Editor	John Man
Deputy Editor	Simon Rigge
Picture Editor	Jean I. Tennant
Design Consultant	Louis Klein
Staff Writers	Susan Hillaby Heather Wyatt Christopher Farman
Picture Researchers	Marian Berman Pamela Marke
Art Director	Robert Hook
Assistant Art Director	Graham Davis
Art Assistant	Bridget Allan
Editorial Assistant	Vanessa Kramer
Staff Photographer	Eileen Tweedy
Partwork Director	Kurt Medina
Sales Director	George Gillespie
Consultants	D.K. Fieldhouse, Lecturer in Commonwealth History and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford A.F. Madden, Reader in Commonwealth Government and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford

TIMOTHY S. GREEN, who wrote the main text of this issue, is a British author and journalist. He read history at Christ's College, Cambridge, and studied as a postgraduate in Canada. He was London correspondent of several American magazines, including *Life*, and from 1964 to 1966, Editor of *The Illustrated London News*. His books include *The World of Gold*, *The Smugglers* and *The Adventurers*.

Subscriptions – These are available at £6·50 for six months, inclusive of postage and packing. For addresses outside of the United Kingdom, the rate is £8·75, inclusive of surface postage and packing.

Back Numbers – These are available at your local newsagent or may be secured by post for the inclusive price of 25p per issue. Be sure and specify which issue(s) you desire.

Orders for both subscriptions and back numbers should be sent, with remittance, to *The British Empire*, BBC Publications, 35 Marylebone High St., London W1M 4AA.

Binders – These may be ordered at £1·05 for the Standard edition and £1·75 for the Deluxe edition, either individually or on subscription. Orders, with remittance, should be sent to *British Empire Binders*, BBC Publications, P.O. Box No. 126, London SE1 5JZ.

NOTE: All above payments should be by crossed cheque/P.O.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Inside back cover: The Parker Gallery, London. Trustees of the British Museum 1750 (Lambton), 1751 (T. Baring, H. Labouchère, G. Elliot, G. Eden); Lord Elgin for Bruce Family Collection 1740–7, 1750 (J. Bruce); by courtesy of Lord Halifax 1750 (E.F.L. Wood); India Office Library and Records 1750 (V.A. Bruce); Keystone Press Agency 1750 (Sir A. Douglas-Home, Lord Avon); National Portrait Gallery, London 1751 (F. Baring, G. Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, Lord J. Russell), 1752/3; *Punch* 1764; Radio Times Hulton Picture Library 1750 (C. Grey, C. Wood, A.H.G. Grey), 1751 (T.G. Baring, G.J. Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound), 1755–63. PHOTOGRAPHERS: Bryan and Shear Ltd 1740–7, 1750 (J. Bruce); Eileen Tweedy 1750 (Lambton), 1751 (T. Baring, H. Labouchère, G. Elliot, G. Eden), 1764, inside back cover.

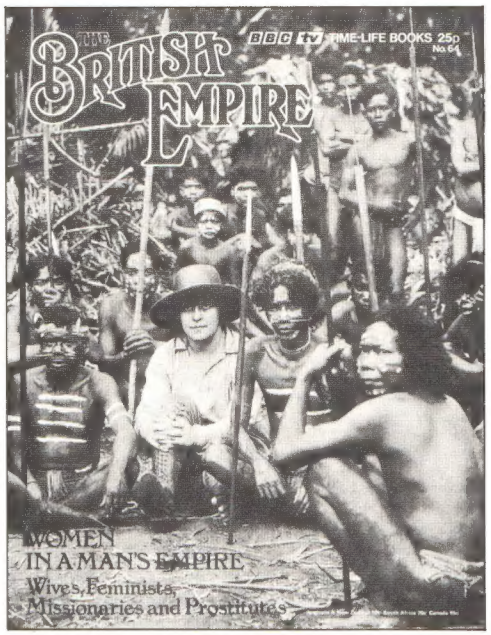
© 1973. Time-Life International (Nederland) B.V.

Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Published by Time-Life International (Nederland) B.V. in co-operation with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Distributed in the U.K. by Time-Life International Ltd. and BBC Publications.

Printed in England by Jarrold and Sons Ltd. Norwich.



CONTENTS

1737. The Top Families

The origins, relationships and aspirations of the 5,000 landed families who ruled Britain and the Empire until the beginning of this century.

1740. Picture Essay: A Family Affair

A profile of the aristocratic Elgins of Scotland, who – often at high personal cost – maintained a long family tradition of top-level imperial service.

1748. Dozens of Cousins

The Great Reform Bill of 1832 was the first step on the road to universal franchise – but real power remained in the hands of the top families and their favoured "cousins."

1755. Picture Essay: Seedbed of the Imperial Elite

Some of the institutions that moulded the men in chief colonial posts.

1764. The Last of the Line

Descendants of families that had helped to shape and run the Empire were still in harness when the end of imperial rule came after the last war.

Cover: A portrait gallery of some of the Empire's top men. Moulded by a common aristocratic background and often related by blood or marriage, they and other members of an endless cousinhood dominated imperial policy-making for over two centuries.

THE TOP FAMILIES

The commanding heights of the British Empire were for generations a monopoly of the aristocratic élite that wielded power in Britain. United by bonds of birth, marriage and background, and sharing an imperturbable faith in their own right to rule, this exclusive circle laid claim to the senior proconsulships overseas as well as to the Colonial and India Offices in London. By the close of the 19th Century, the self-made men of business were entering these privileged preserves, but aristocratic power lingered on well into the Edwardian sunset.

By Timothy S. Green

Five thousand landed families, all more or less closely related, ruled Britain and its Empire until the beginning of this century. Some of the families were staunch Tories, others were equally fervent Whigs. Occasionally members of the same family could be found in both parties, and it was not unheard of for a Tory to become a Whig or vice versa. What did remain unchanged was the hold that this relatively small group of aristocrats had on certain imperial offices, at home and abroad.

These landowning magnates, accustomed to the wealth, power and social distinction which went with large estates and country houses, were usually quite uninterested in any but the most prestigious imperial posts. Mere colonial governorships, places in the Indian Civil Service or the Colonial Service, commissions in the Army and Navy protecting far-away dependencies – such run-of-the-mill jobs were below their station. Occasionally an aristocratic name pops up in the lists of governors: Lord Onslow in New Zealand, Lord Tennyson in Australia and a handful of other peers, mostly in the 20th Century when these countries, as newly-fledged Dominions, demanded top men for head of state. But, generally, the ordinary jobs were filled by men from the middle class, especially as the Empire expanded and recruitment broadened later in the 19th Century.

The peers restricted themselves to the plum imperial posts: Governor-General in Canada, Viceroy in India or Ireland and Cabinet posts in London, such as Secretary of State for the Colonies or Secretary of State for India. And of these commanding heights, they had a remarkably complete monopoly, maintained and fostered by an intricate web of family relationships. Generation after generation the same names appear until it becomes almost as essential to refer to genealogical charts as to scholarly tomes in order to identify and place in time a particular historical personage. But the following examples clearly indicate the enormous and complex ramifications of the great cousinhood and show how the system actually worked.

When Viscount Hardinge of Penshurst wrote his memoirs, it seemed perfectly natural for him to say: "My real ambition was to follow in the footsteps of my grandfather and to become one day Viceroy of India. I said so in 1890 when engaged to be married and I believed then, as I still believe, that one has only ardently and sufficiently to desire in order to obtain the object of one's ambition." George V made Hardinge Viceroy of India in 1910 and he served there for six years. It perhaps never occurred to him to add a footnote to his memoirs that ambition alone may not have been sufficient. For in securing posts of privilege and power within the Empire, the right family connections were often a better asset than the most burning desire.

That the Hardinge family produced two Viceroys of India is hardly exceptional. The Stanley Family (the Earls of Derby) contributed no less than four Secretaries of State for the Colonies and a

Secretary of State for the Dominions. The descendants of Charles, 1st Earl Grey, included two Secretaries of State for the Colonies, two Viceroys of India, a Secretary of State for India and a Governor-General of Canada (not to mention a Prime Minister, two Foreign Secretaries and two Chancellors of the Exchequer). For good measure, the Greys were also connected by marriage with four other Viceroys of India, a Colonial Secretary and a Governor-General of Canada.

These wealthy families, to whom the privilege that went with owning property was almost sacred, regarded themselves and were generally regarded as an undisputed governing class. As one student of this familial power has pointed out: "The Tory families regarded themselves as owners of the realm, the Whigs saw themselves as trustees, but 'government of the people, for the people, by the privileged classes' might have been taken as a motto for either." The Duke of Argyll once put it more succinctly: "They thought of themselves," he remarked, "as a special breed of spaniels."

The most remarkable "breed of spaniels" could trace their ancestors back to what was affectionately known in the 19th Century as "the Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood." The nine Whig families, all owning great estates, who qualified for membership of this exclusive breeding club were the Russells (the Dukes of Bedford), the Cavendishes (the Dukes of Devonshire), the Spencers (the Dukes of Marlborough), the Leveson-Gowers, the Ponsonbys, the Howards of Carlisle and Norfolk, the Grosvenors and the Fitzwilliams. The great-grandmothers from whom all traced descent were the wives of the 1st Duke of Devonshire, the 1st Duke of Bedford and the 1st Duke of Marlborough.

The pre-eminence of the Circle is unequalled. No less than nine out of twenty Prime Ministers, fourteen Colonial Secretaries, ten Governor-Generals or Viceroys of India and four Governor-Generals of Canada in the 19th Century, had some family connection to the Circle. As Lord Granville, Colonial Secretary under the premiership of William Gladstone (himself related to the Circle), once conceded in Parliament: "My lords, I am a Gower, I am also a Cavendish. . . . I am sorry to say that I am also related to some of the Howards. . . . I had better make a clean breast of it at once; and I am obliged to admit that some of those who went before me had such quivers of daughters who did not die old maids that I have relations upon this side of the House, relations upon the cross benches, relations upon the other side of the House."

Despite their dominance of the corridors of power, the élite of the Circle – like most of their countrymen – were often rather remote from, and had little interest in, the day-to-day running of the Empire. They were always much more preoccupied with political intrigues at home and preferred the comforts of their British estates to the dusty plains of India. The post of Colonial Secretary was rarely more than a passing rung for many of them in the climb to the Foreign Office, the Treasury or No 10 Downing Street. The thought of being exiled to the political sidelines in India or Canada (quite apart from the dangers to their health) frequently appalled them.

As Philip Woodruff points out in *The Men who Ruled India*, "It might have been supposed that English statesmen would vie eagerly among themselves for the throne of Akbar and Auranzebe. But it was not so. It was not easy to find a suitable Viceroy. One man had his eye on the Foreign Office, another did not like to leave his hunters and partridges."

The jobs often went, therefore, to members of the great families who were unlikely to achieve Cabinet rank or be named to the high offices of Chamberlain or Treasurer of the royal household. Governor-Generalships were useful niches for the younger sons of the aristocracy. Lord William Bentinck, for instance, Governor-General of India in 1828–36, was the younger son of the 3rd Duke of Portland who was twice Prime Minister. Governor-Generalships made nice plums, too, for country cousins from Scotland or Ireland. These men were often outside the mainstream of power, but were readily available to answer any call of duty to serve their country abroad. James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, married into the powerful Lambton family and was soon off to Canada as Governor-General, and afterwards to India as Viceroy. A generation later his son, the 9th Earl, was recruited from his quiet Scottish estate to be Viceroy; he, however, was not eager to take the post and made an emphatic and heartfelt plea that he was not up to the job and did not want it.

In the end, duty to family and country would make the most reluctant peer forsake his home for a few years; for the preservation of the whole ruling system depended on everything being kept within the family circle. The Cabinet in London took it for granted that, when a new Viceroy of India or Governor-General of Canada was appointed, they sent out a noble lord of good breeding from the endless cousinhood.

Generally, there was little of the reluctance displayed by the 9th Earl of Elgin. To the aristocrat who knew in his heart he could never make the Cabinet, the Viceroyalty of India could be a crowning achievement. Moreover, if his father or grandfather had served there before him, he was understandably eager to follow. We have seen already Viscount Hardinge's determination to tread in the steps of his grandfather, who was Governor-General of India in 1844–48; his own appointment, therefore, was "the realisation of the dream of my life." And as he stepped ashore in Bombay in 1910 Hardinge took great delight in pointing out in a short but fervent speech that not only was he following his grandfather, but also a great-uncle, Captain George Nicholas Hardinge R.N., who had been killed in action aboard a British frigate near Bombay, and was commemorated by a statue in Bombay Cathedral.

On his arrival, Hardinge had been greeted by the man he was succeeding, the 4th Earl of Minto. Minto's great-grandfather, the 1st Earl, had also been Governor-General just a century before. The familial nature of India's governors could hardly have been more apparent.

The Minto saga is typical of many Empire families. After the 1st Earl's suc-

cessful term as Governor-General of India in 1807–13, his family's prestige rose. The 2nd Earl became First Lord of the Admiralty and Lord Privy Seal. And his daughter, Frances, clinched the Mintos' arrival in the inner circles of power by marrying Lord John Russell; this full-blooded member of the Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood held many Cabinet posts (including Colonial Secretary twice) and served as Prime Minister from 1846 to 1852.

The 3rd Earl of Minto preferred a quiet life in Scotland, but the family came back into the circles of power with the 4th Earl of Minto ("Rolly" to his Old Etonian friends). He grew up roaming around the woodlands and glens of the family home on the Scottish border, went to Eton and Cambridge, and joined the Scots Guards. For a while he became a society playboy, delighting in all-night balls. He was also a talented horseman and, as an amateur jockey, he even rode in four Grand Nationals. In the 1876 race he broke his neck. But he survived and went on to become a newspaper correspondent reporting on wars in Spain, Turkey, Afghanistan and Egypt.

He then settled down and consolidated his excellent connections by marrying Mary Grey, daughter of General Charles Grey, private secretary to Queen Victoria and second son of the Prime Minister, Earl Grey. The wedding was a lavish and splendid affair held at St. Margaret's Westminster.

Queen Victoria sent a telegraph of congratulations and gave the happy couple a shawl. Shortly afterwards Minto, deciding he had better do something else beside racing horses, went off to Canada as military secretary to Lord Lansdowne, the Governor-General, with whom he had been at school. The experience gave him ideas of becoming a Governor-General himself. He made discreet soundings. "My Canadian negotiations are still proceeding," he wrote to a friend. "I have done nothing directly myself; friends, however, have done a great deal: Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire . . . have all been approached." Sure enough, the appointment materialized. At a farewell dinner given for him by Old Etonians shortly before he set off, Lord Rosebery, the Prime Minister, proudly noted that all but one of the last six Governor-Generals of Canada had been Old Etonians. And Rosebery added: "Lord Minto comes of a governing family. There has been a Viceroy Lord Minto already and innumerable distinguished members of the family in the last century."

Once he had proved himself in Canada in 1898–1904, the Indian Viceroyalty followed. "The greatest appointment I had ever hoped for," Minto confided in his diary, "and still what a pang to leave the dear old place [the family home] again." But duty – and ambition – called.

Shortly after his arrival in India in 1905, Minto was deeply moved to find permanently displayed in the Council Chamber of Government House his great-grandfather's portrait. His first callers made him feel even more at home. They were a deputation from four maharajahs whose lands the 1st Earl had protected from invasion 100 years before. They came to pledge their loyalty to the great-grandson of their benefactor. Minto noted in a letter that: "It was pleasant to find India has a long memory."

During his term as Viceroy, Minto's sole anxiety was that the Indian climate might kill him as it had done his ancestor. For the 1st Earl, after six years' labour in India from 1807 to 1813, returned to London a desperately sick man, wanting only to get back to the peace of the family acres amid the fresh green hills of the Border country. But he died on the coach journey north. The 4th Earl was more fortunate; he survived more than five years of work in India to spend his last years at his seat in the Scottish countryside, where he died in 1910.

Minto retired from India well pleased that he had survived. But he also had reason for satisfaction over his successful effort in making the constitutional changes known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. Working with Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, Minto was able for the first time to secure the appointment of Indians to places on various governmental councils. But there was no denying that he was also pleased that his successor was a man of good family like himself. When he heard that Lord Hardinge would succeed him he wrote: "Lord Hardinge's appointment is excellent . . . his family connections with India will stand him in good stead."

There were, of course, aristocrats who did not enjoy family ties to the Sacred Circle of Great-Grandmotherhood. Nevertheless the aristocracy was so tightly knit by marriage and blood, and the concept that one's relatives came first in sharing any cut of the public purse was followed so closely that almost anyone of importance was a distant cousin of at least one of his colleagues. One estimate suggests that between 20,000 and 30,000 "cousins" coveted virtually all significant government, diplomatic and colonial posts. Lord Ellenborough, for instance, the Governor-General of India in 1842–44, felt quite at ease handing over to his successor, Lord Hardinge, for both men had married daughters of the Marquess of Londonderry. That the sisters did not get on well with each other did not matter: the relationship was still a sacred one. The Marquess's children did well in the Empire stakes; apart from the two daughters marrying Governor-Generals of India, his son, Viscount Castlereagh, was a distinguished President of the Board of Control of the East India Company, Secretary of State for the Colonies and Foreign Secretary.

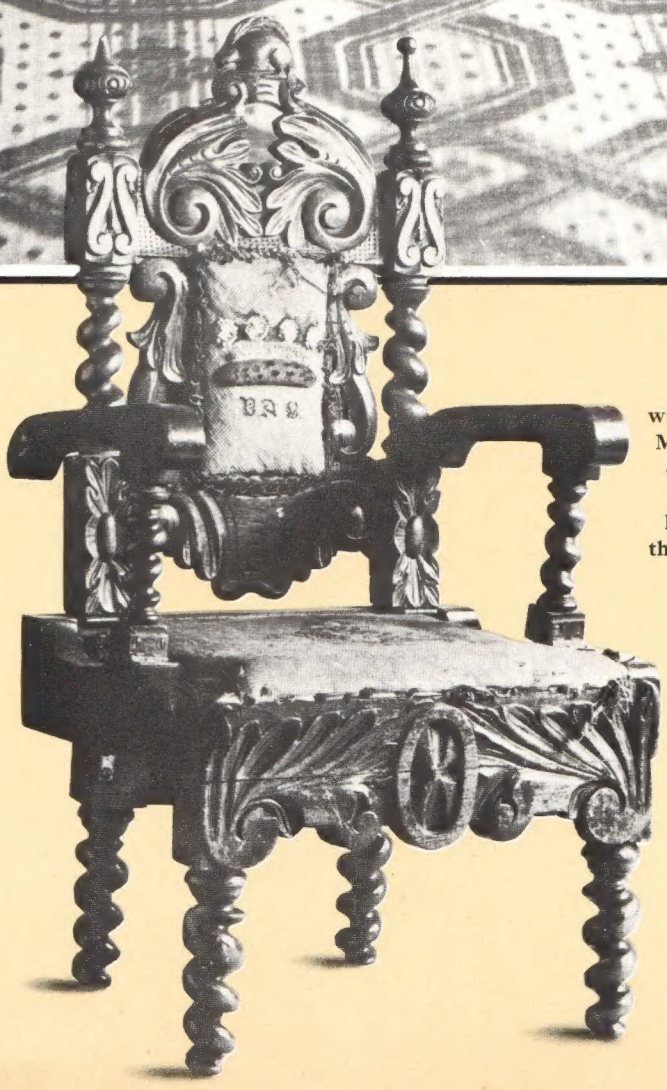
Indeed, the marriage alliances interlock so closely that it is often easier to note the mere handful of rulers who were *not* related. Of the 21 Governor-Generals and Viceroys of India (the title changed after the Mutiny) in the 19th Century, a mere five had no tie either with the Sacred Circle of Great-Grandmotherhood or to any other family immediately involved in the Empire. Even among these five, one was the nephew of General Jeffrey Amherst, Governor-General of British North America before the War of Independence. Another, Viscount Hastings, got the job of Governor-General in 1813 because he was a bosom drinking pal of the Prince Regent (later George IV). Hastings was deeply in debt and asked the Prince Regent to find him a nice, lucrative position that would get him out of London high society for a while.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

"The British Empire," commented one astute observer as late as 1938, "is ruled by Christian names." He was referring to the fact that many top imperial jobs fell frequently to the members of a single aristocratic family. The Elgins of Scotland were a prime example of this dynastic tradition in Victorian and Edwardian days.

The 8th Earl of Elgin poses as Governor-General of Canada with Lady Elgin (right), with his sister-in-law, and with his ADC.

The silver spade (above) was flourished by Lady Elgin when she turned the first sod of a new railway. Lord Elgin used the trowel (below) to lay the corner-stone of a school.



Victor Alexander Bruce (above), 9th Earl of Elgin, was born in Canada on May 16, 1849. As the son of the Governor-General, he was presented with a baby chair (left) by the people of Montreal on his first birthday. He was destined to continue his family's long tradition of imperial service, and in later years, he had gloomily to accept the considerable burdens as well as the privileges of exalted birth.

In Harness to the Empire

Like many of his noble contemporaries, James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, believed he had inherited a duty "to watch over the interests of those great offshoots of the British race which plant themselves in distant lands." For over 20 years he did just that, taking up his first assignment as Governor of Jamaica at the age of only 30. After four years of "forlorn and isolated" service, during which his first wife died, Elgin returned gratefully to his Scottish estate.

But in less than a year he was installed as Governor-General of Canada. He arrived in Montreal in January, 1847, with his new bride, Mary Louise, whose own father, the 1st Earl of Durham, had served as Governor-General only nine years before. Having brought French and English Canadians closer together, he completed his mission in 1855. In 1857 he was dispatched to deal with the troublesome Emperor of China. After four years of bloodshed and bargaining, he managed to secure full acceptance of his government's demands.

Leaving his brother, Sir Frederick Bruce, behind in Peking as British Minister, Elgin sailed to take on his final task as Viceroy of India, surviving the cares and climate of his new domain for only 22 months. Warned of his imminent demise, he replied: "It is well that I should die in harness."

On May 21, 1860, the ship carrying Lord Elgin and members of the Anglo-French mission to China ran aground off the coast of Ceylon. To prevent panic, Elgin and the French Ambassador sat calmly chatting on the storm-tossed poop while the other passengers preceded them into the lifeboats.

Lord Elgin is pictured here soon after his triumphal entry into Peking as British Ambassador Extraordinary. He detested the brutality shown by many Europeans towards the Chinese, but believed China would yield nothing "except under the influence of fear."

This contemporary Chinese painting shows Lord Elgin (seated at the head of the left-hand table) negotiating in Peking with envoys of the Emperor. Under the Convention signed on October 24, 1860, the Chinese ceded Kowloon to Britain, agreed to pay an indemnity and ratified a previous treaty.

Lord Elgin relaxes with his wife and daughter outside the Viceregal residence at Simla. As a devoted family man, Elgin was always overcome with homesickness when imperial duties tore him away from his wife and children. He wrote on one occasion to Lady Elgin that his eyes became dim with tears as "thoughts of home crowd upon me."

The Reluctant Viceroy

When Mr. Gladstone proposed Victor Alexander Bruce, 9th Earl of Elgin, as Viceroy of India, Queen Victoria was not amused. Although he was her own godson and connected with "that most distinguished family of Bruce," Her Majesty did not think him in the least suited to the post his father had held. "He is very shy," she wrote, "and most painfully silent, has no presence."

Elgin himself was unhappy about the appointment, but served dutifully in India from 1894 to 1899. His wife's health was permanently impaired by the rigours of the Indian climate and she later became bedridden. When, in 1905, he was offered the Colonial Secretaryship, his reply was characteristically self-effacing. "So far as personal inclination and interests are concerned, I have no desire to seek office. But . . . I cannot allow personal considerations to prevail."

"It is to your dear companionship," Lord Elgin told his wife, "that I owe everything and above all the atmosphere of affection and peace which so gladdens our home."

Lord Elgin, bowler on lap, poses with the Balliol College Cricket XI, of which he was captain. After Oxford, duty forced him into less enjoyable pursuits.

The modest Lord Elgin was obliged to strike presentation medals commemorating his Indian Viceroyalty, but he succeeded in doing without personal visiting cards.

We, the Members of the
to tender to Your Excellency our sincere congratulations upon the signal mark of honor recently conferred by Her most gracious Majesty, in appointing Your Excellency to the high and responsible position of Governor General and Viceroy of India

colonies we consider ourselves honored whenever any Scotsman has attained merited distinction, but when we remember that Your Excellency is Canadian born and the son of a former member of our own Society, we feel that an Honorary member of our own Society we feel that there are special reasons why we should congratulate another

This congratulatory address from members of the St. Andrew's Society in Toronto recalls Lord Elgin's Canadian birth and Scottish descent.

The pomp and ceremony that greeted his arrival in Calcutta as Viceroy on January 25, 1894, was undoubtedly disagreeable to Lord Elgin. He disliked driving in a carriage, even on public occasions, and declared himself an "opponent of extravagance and . . . a foe to display."

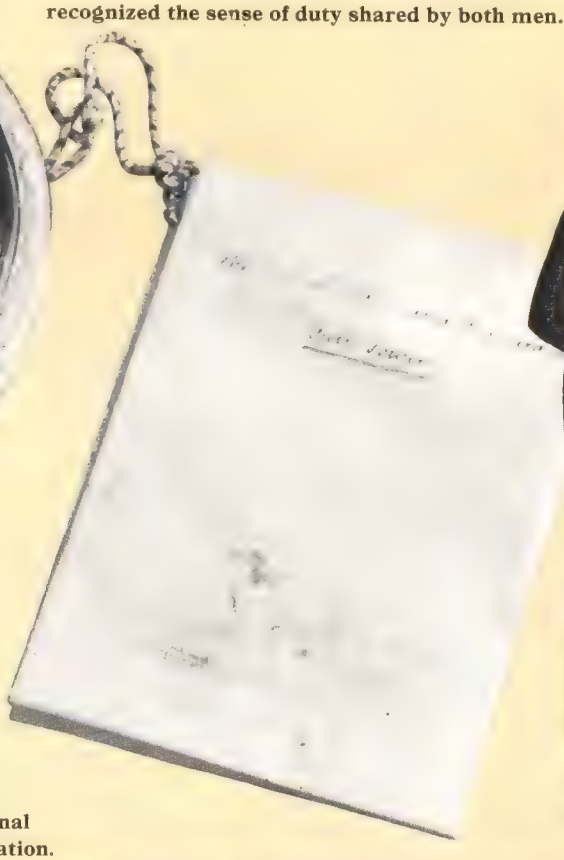
Souvenirs of Service

When the men who served the Empire overseas came home, their trunks full of the souvenirs and outworn trappings of office, it was often to a sour welcome and a sense of bitter anticlimax. For the British and their governments paid scant regard to those who ran the colonies. Even the top imperial posts in London were thought to be somewhat second-rate.

Having served a demanding term as Indian Viceroy, Lord Elgin had become Colonial Secretary in 1905. In 1908 he read of his dismissal in his morning paper. This was confirmed in a mere two-line note from the Prime Minister, Asquith. Shocked by such off-handedness, Elgin refused Asquith's offer of a marquesate and wrote to a friend of the Premier's lack of regard "for the usages common among gentlemen . . . even a housemaid gets a better warning." Like many others, Elgin had little tangible consolation for his services to Empire except for family mementoes like those shown here.

After her husband's death in India, the 8th Countess of Elgin received this token of mourning from Queen Victoria. The Queen, still grieving over the death of Prince Albert two years before, recognized the sense of duty shared by both men.

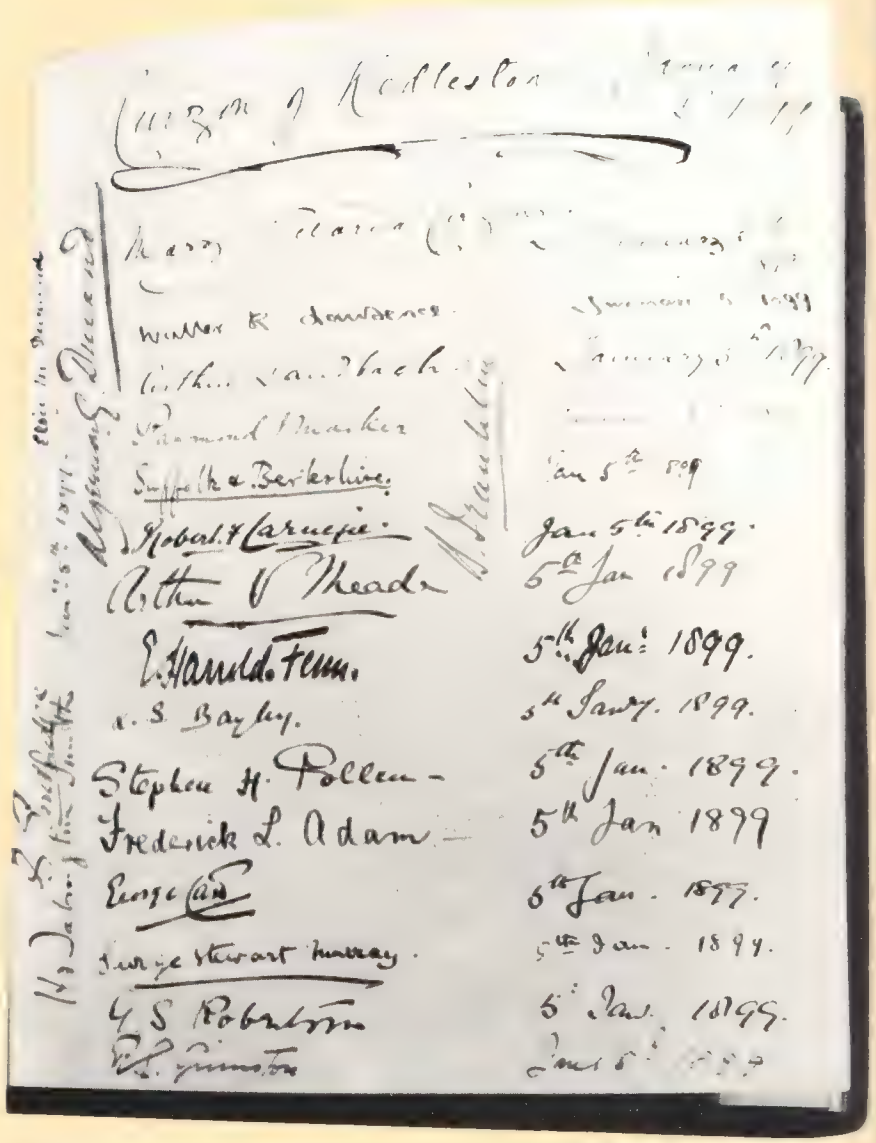
This official seal and letter of credence granting the 8th Earl of Elgin full powers as British Ambassador Extraordinary in China replaced those lost at sea when the Earl's ship was wrecked during a storm.



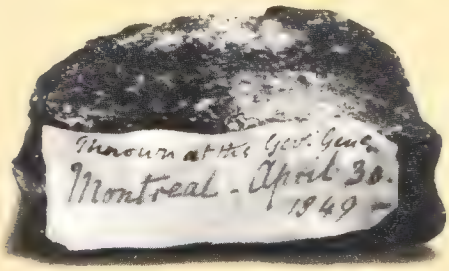
As Indian Viceroy, the 9th Lord Elgin wore this civil uniform of a Privy Councillor.

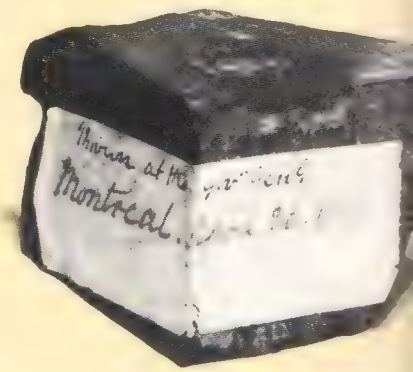
The prize trophy of the 9th Lord Elgin's personal souvenirs was this gold-lettered Garter decoration.

This statue of herself was the Queen's christening gift for the 9th Lord Elgin's son, born in India.



The final page of the visitors' book which the 9th Lord Elgin kept during his service in India bears the signature of Lord Curzon, his successor as Viceroy.





These rocks were among missiles aimed at the 8th Lord Elgin during a riot in Montreal. As Governor-General, Elgin tried to conciliate the French, but in doing so he provoked the wrath of English-speaking loyalists.

II. Dozens of Cousins

The most persistent name in the Empire is Grey. No other family can match the track record held by the descendants of Charles, 1st Earl Grey (1729–1807). What few posts escaped the Greys themselves seem to have gone to such families as the Lambtons, Elgins, Woods and Barings who were astute enough to ally themselves to the Grey clan by marriage.

The Grey family, surprisingly perhaps, did not come originally from the aristocracy. For many generations they were local squires in the border country of Northumberland, but they never owned vast estates. Their fortunes began to turn upwards early in the 18th Century when Sir Henry Grey (1691–1750) married Hannah, the daughter of Thomas Wood of Fallodon, a small village in the Cheviot hills just five miles from the Grey home at Howick. The fine estate and country house of Fallodon passed to the Greys when Hannah's father died. Fallodon then became the home of one prominent branch of the family throughout the next 200 years. Sir Henry and Hannah had several children, including Henry, who built a grand new family mansion at Howick, and Charles. Charles was with Wolfe at Quebec and as a general fought the Americans during the War of Independence. In one campaign he became known as "No Flint Grey" because of an order to his soldiers one night to knock the flints out of their muskets and attack silently with bayonets only. For his services Charles was created 1st Earl Grey.

The road to success was ensured when his son, also Charles, 2nd Earl Grey (1764–1845), married Mary Ponsonby, daughter of Lord Ponsonby, an authentic descendant of the Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood. In just two generations the Greys had risen from being quiet country gentry to enter the heart of the English aristocracy.

The 2nd Earl Grey, a tall, distinguished-looking man with a small mouth, long sensitive nose and delicate hands, is remembered chiefly as the Prime Minister who pushed through the great Reform Bill of 1832. That first step on the road to universal suffrage, which widened the franchise and eliminated "rotten boroughs," through which many privileged "cousins" first entered Parliament, did not prevent Earl Grey himself from ruling through a tiny clique. In his Cabinet, one historian observed: "The shoulders were aristocratic as though the cabinet had been designed as a mannequin parade of rank and property." The Cabinet included Grey's son-in-law, Lord Durham (later Governor-General of Canada), his brother-in-law, Edward Ellice, as Chief Whip and no less than seven peers or baronets related in some way to the Sacred Circle.

The Greys were getting into their stride. Earl Grey and his wife, Mary, had 15 children, whose marriages in due course allied them to other important families. Soon the family tree began to resemble an octopus, with tentacles reaching out throughout the land. Little wonder that one of his political rivals snapped that Earl Grey "would centre the power of the State in a few great families and they would have no sympathy with the body of the people."

Their hold on the shaping of the Empire was remarkable. The foundation stones of responsible government to Canada, for instance, were laid by the Grey family. To begin with, Earl Grey's son-in-law, John Lambton, 1st Earl of Durham, was sent out to Canada in 1838 as Governor-General where he used a firm – some said dictatorial – hand to put down rebellions in what was then Upper (British) and Lower (French) Canada. John Lambton himself was head of an ancient family, the Lambtons of Lambton Castle in Durham, whose wealth from their estates had been greatly increased by the development of collieries. He was somewhat celebrated for a remark that a man ought to be able to "jog along on £40,000 a year." He was married to Louisa, the Prime Minister's eldest daughter.

Durham spent only six months in Canada, but his report outlining the political future of the country and recommending a legislative union of all the Canadian colonies is a landmark in the history of the Empire. The eventual implementation of his report was carried through by two of his closest relatives: his brother-in-law, Henry, 3rd Earl Grey, who became Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1846, and his son-in-law, James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, who became Governor-General the same year. It was Henry Grey who realized the significance of Durham's report and determined that it should not moulder for ever in some pigeon-hole of the Colonial Office. He understood, as Durham had done, that settler colonies could not continue to be held in subjugation to Britain. So, against much opposition, on November 3, 1846 he authorized Elgin as Governor-General to sanction in Canada the adoption of responsible government. This was a decision that many feel entitles Henry Grey, as much as his brother-in-law, Durham, to the title "principal founder of the British Commonwealth."

The patronage extended by the Earls Grey naturally benefited other branches of their own family. Sir George Grey, (1809–82), 2nd Baronet of Fallodon and nephew of Grey, the Prime Minister, carved out a strong political career as an eminent Home Secretary for almost 20 years and also served briefly as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Half a century later *his* grandson, Sir Edward Grey, 1st Viscount Fallodon, was Foreign Secretary during the 11 fateful war and pre-war years from 1905 to 1916.

Naturally, the Grey's influence also embraced Indian affairs, although there it was relatives by marriage who were most intimately involved. The Indian association began when Mary Grey, one of those 15 children of Earl Grey, the Prime Minister, fell in love with and married her father's private secretary, Sir Charles Wood. The young man came from a Yorkshire family, the Woods of Monk Bretton, near Barnsley, who had been well known in the county since Tudor days. None of them, however, made any impact on politics until Sir Charles Wood (1800–85) distinguished himself as the outstanding scholar in his class at Eton and won a double first at Oxford. His father then obligingly spent £4,000 to buy for him the safe seat of Grimsby so that he could enter Parliament. Once there, Earl Grey recognized him as one of the brightest young Whigs and chose him as his private secretary. Marriage to the Prime Minister's daughter did the rest. As a family biographer remarked: "It was a love match that was full of political advantage."

Promotion was swift. By 1846 Sir Charles was Chancellor of the Exchequer

in Lord John Russell's administration. He must have felt entirely at home; the Cabinet included his brother-in-law, Henry Grey, at the Colonial Office, and his cousin, Sir George Grey, at the Home Office. Later on Sir Francis Baring, who had married Sir George's sister, Jane, joined them. The four formed what they called "a family pact" within the Cabinet.

The right connections, however, could not make Sir Charles Wood a great Chancellor. He quite failed, for instance, to come to grips with the economic problems of the Irish potato famine. So in 1852, somewhat discredited, he was shuffled sideways to be President of the Board of Control of the East India Company – a post that carried with it a seat in the Cabinet. Here he found his true role and for the next 14 years he was to be one of the most influential men in reshaping Indian policy before and after the Mutiny of 1857. He realized at the outset that India had to be ruled by consent, not by force. His reforms included the establishment of universities in India and the appointment of Indians to sit as judges in the high court. Shortly after the East India Company was wound up in 1858 and all its authority was transferred to the Crown, he became Secretary of State for India. When he retired in 1866 he was rewarded with a peerage and became the 1st Viscount Halifax.

Shortly after his retirement the new Viscount received a note from Sir John Lawrence, the Viceroy of India, telling him that a Hindu astrologer had predicted that one day a grandson of his, as yet unborn, would be Viceroy. Sure enough, in 1926, precisely 60 years later, Lord Irwin (later Earl of Halifax), grandson of the 1st Viscount, arrived in India as Viceroy.

The Grey family patronage – which had been so useful in helping Lord Irwin's grandfather – was not limited solely to ancient landed families; newcomers with the essential credentials of property and respectability were also welcome. No newcomers to British high society in the early 19th Century had better credentials than the descendants of Sir Francis Baring (1740–1810), the founder of Baring Brothers & Co., merchant bankers.

Sir Francis, the descendant of a German merchant from Bremen who had settled in England in 1717, had outstanding financial talents. During a 30-year career in the city of London, his financial wizardry which won him the title of the first merchant of Europe, not only made him a fortune, but also made him an invaluable adviser on economic affairs to a whole generation of politicians. In 1793 the Prime Minister, William Pitt, made Sir Francis a Baronet and approved his appointment as chairman of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. Sir Francis consolidated his status by purchasing for £150,000 a vast Hampshire estate of 12,000 acres from the Duke of Bedford; he then spent a further £40,000 doing up the mansion that went with it. His four sons built well on this solid foundation. The eldest worked with the East India Company in Calcutta, the second, Alexander Baring, 1st Lord Ashburton, went to the United States in 1842 to negotiate as English Commissioner in a border dispute between the United States and Canada. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty, named after the two chief negotiators, clearly defined the border and was signed in Washington. Two other sons became Members of Parliament, and one of them married Frances Poulett-Thompson, the sister of Lord Sydenham who was Governor-General of Canada from 1839 to 1841. The Barings were thus a family to be reckoned with. "Two generations had given the family not only a solid basis of material prosperity," observed a family biographer, "but a position of general consideration certain to open the door of official preferment to any of its members who might wish to make politics a career."

The Barings' success was clinched when Sir Francis Baring (1792–1866), grandson of the 1st Baronet, married Jane Grey, the daughter of Sir George Grey of Fallodon, whose brother, Earl Grey, was Prime Minister. The marriage definitely placed the Barings inside the privileged enclave of governing families.

As politicians and merchant bankers, the Barings now enjoyed a dual influence on Britain and the Empire. Sir Francis Baring himself became Chancellor of the Exchequer, while his brother, Thomas, ran the bank. As Chancellor, Sir Francis was a member of the Cabinet that granted responsible government to Canada, while the family bank was busy underwriting the expansion of the railways there. In 1866, for instance, Baring Brothers negotiated a loan of £3 million to complete the inter-colonial railway that was essential in forging Canada into one nation.

Meanwhile, another member of the Baring family, Henry Labouchère, was at the head of the Colonial Office for three years from 1855 to 1858. Labouchère was an exceptionally well-connected fellow, whose family connections were impressively complicated. His mother was Dorothy Baring, daughter of the first Sir Francis, and he married his cousin, Frances Baring, sister of the second Sir Francis. For several years Labouchère and his brother-in-law were in the Cabinet together, along with three close relatives from the Grey family. Later on, after his first wife died, Labouchère married Mary Carlisle, a daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, one of the true sons of the Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood. No one could ask for a more impeccable alliance.

The Barings' association with India, which continued for three generations, culminated when Thomas Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook (1826–1904) became Viceroy in 1872. Thomas's career illustrates excellently the closed circuit of privilege within which the family moved. He studied first at Oxford and then took the Grand Tour of Europe. On his return to London a shoal of political openings awaited him. He declined an offer from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood (his father's cousin by marriage), to be his private secretary and chose instead to go to Ireland as private secretary to his uncle, Henry Labouchère, who was Chief Secretary there. He continued his political apprenticeship at the Home Office under his uncle, Sir George Grey of Fallodon, before finally joining Sir Charles Wood who had by that time moved to the India Office. However, since it had become apparent that Thomas's ability was not as outstanding as his family connections, the inevitable conclusion was that he was not cut out for high Cabinet office. But the Viceroyalty of India seemed a suitable niche for him and he was packed off there in 1872.

To keep it all in the family, the new

BORN T

Sir Charles Grey
1729-1807
later 1st Earl Grey

Mary Ponsonby ● **Charles Grey**
1764-1845
2nd Earl Grey
Prime Minister

Hon. Sir George Grey
1767-1828
1st Bt. of Fallodon

Edward Grey
1782-1837
Bishop of Hereford

Thomas Bruce
1766-1841
7th Earl of Elgin, 11th of Kincardine
Shipped Elgin marbles to Britain

John George Lambton ● **Louisa Grey**
1792-1848
1st Earl of Durham
Lord Privy Seal
Governor-General of Canada

Mary Grey ● **Sir Charles Wood**
1800-1885
later 1st Viscount Halifax
Secretary of State for India
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1st Lord of the Admiralty
Lord Privy Seal

Henry George Grey
1802-1894
3rd Earl Grey
Colonial Secretary

General Charles Grey
1804-1870
Private Secretary to
Queen Victoria

Sir George Grey
1799-1882
2nd Bt., of Fallodon
Colonial Secretary
Home Secretary

James Bruce ● **Mary Lambton**
1811-1863
8th Earl of Elgin, 12th of Kincardine
Governor-General of Canada
Envoy to China
Viceroy of India

George Frederick D'Arcy Langton
1828-79
2nd Earl of Durham

Lt. Col. George Henry Grey
1835-1874

Jane Grey ●

Charles Lindley Wood
1839-1934
2nd Viscount Halifax

Sir Edward Grey
1862-1933
later 1st Viscount Grey
of Fallodon
Foreign Secretary
Ambassador to U.S.A.

Victor Alexander Bruce
1849-1917
9th Earl of Elgin, 13th of Kincardine
Viceroy of India
Colonial Secretary

Edward Frederick Lindley Wood
1881-1959
Lord Irwin and later
1st Earl of Halifax
Viceroy of India
Secretary of State for War
Lord Privy Seal
Lord President of the Council
Foreign Secretary
Ambassador to the U.S.A.

Sir Alexander (Alec) Frederick Douglas-Home
1903
14th Earl of Home
(disclaimed peerage 1963)
Commonwealth Secretary
Prime Minister
Foreign Secretary

Sir Robert Anthony Eden
1897
later 1st Earl of Avon
Foreign Secretary
Prime Minister

Albert Henry George Grey
1851-1917
4th Earl Grey
Governor-General of Canada

THE TOP POSTS in government, both at home and in the Empire, were monopolized until the late 19th Century by a few aristocratic families, often interrelated by marriage. A revealing example of this exclusive cousinhood is provided by the interlinking family trees, shown on these pages, of the Greys, Barings, Bruces, Elliots and Woods.

D RULE

Sir Francis Baring, 1st Bt.,
1740-1810
Founder of Baring Bros.
Chairman of the East India Company

Sir Thomas Baring, 2nd Bt.,
1772-1848,
East India Company

Alexander Baring
1774-1848
1st Lord Ashburton
President of the Board of Trade
Settled Canada/U.S.A. Border dispute
Envoy to U.S.A.

Dorothy Baring ● **Peter Caesar Labouchere**

Henry Baring
1776-1848

William Baring
1779-1820
Member of Parliament

● **Frances Poulett Thomson**

John Buncombe Poulett Thomson

William Bingham Baring
1799-1864
2nd Lord Ashburton
Colonial reformer
Secretary of the Board of Control,
East India Company

Francis Baring
1800-1868
3rd Lord Ashburton
Colonial reformer

Sir Evelyn Baring
1841-1917
later 1st Earl of Cromer
Agent and Consul-General
in Egypt

Charles Poulett Thomson
1799-1841
Lord Sydenham
Governor-General of Canada

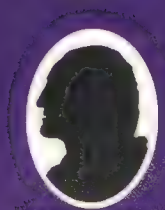
Francis Thornhill Baring, 3rd Bt.,
1796-1866
later 1st Lord Northbrook
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1st Lord of the Admiralty

Thomas Baring
1799-1873
Member of Parliament

Frances Baring

Henry Labouchere ● **Mary Carlisle**
1798-1869
later 1st and last Baron Taunton
Colonial Secretary
Chief Secretary of State for Ireland
President of the Board of Trade

Thomas George Baring
1826-1904
1st Earl of Northbrook
Viceroy of India



Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3rd Bt.,
1722-1777

Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 4th Bt.,
1751-1814
later 1st Earl of Minto
Governor-General of India

Eleanor ● **William Eden**
1744-1814
1st Lord Auckland
Envoy to France
Ambassador to Spain
and to the Netherlands

Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound
1782-1859
2nd Earl of Minto
1st Lord of the Admiralty
Lord Privy Seal

Frances ● **Lord John Russell**
1792-1878
later 1st Earl Russell
Prime Minister
Colonial Secretary
Home Secretary
Foreign Secretary

George Eden
1784-1849
2nd Baron Auckland
later 1st Earl of Auckland
1st Lord of the Admiralty
Governor-General of India

William Hugh Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound
1814-1891
3rd Earl of Minto

Mary Grey ● **Gilbert John Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound**
1845-1914
4th Earl of Minto
Governor-General of Canada
Viceroy of India

Three-quarters of M.P.s in the Commons in 1833 were members of landed families. Of this ruling élite, the 27 examples listed below either held top imperial posts or belonged to that exclusive cousinhood of aristocratic families which dominated the government of Britain and her Empire in the 19th Century. (The peers were present under their traditional right to stand "below the gallery" and listen to debates.)

Viceroy was accompanied by his cousin, Evelyn Baring, as his private secretary. At that time Evelyn was just 31, but he quickly proved to be an exceptional administrator. So much so, that he often appeared to be usurping the Viceroy's functions and running the show himself. Behind his back everyone called him the Vice-Viceroy or sometimes "Over-Baring." Having cut his teeth in India, Evelyn Baring moved on to Egypt as Commissioner of the Debt and Controller General – a highly appropriate post for a member of a great banking family. Within a short time he was knighted and given a new post as British Agent and Consul General in Cairo. The actual title may not sound very important; in fact, Sir Evelyn Baring ruled Egypt for the next 23 years, from 1883 to 1906. As James Morris observed in *Pax Britannica*, "His mandate of power was indeterminate. His use of it was masterly. He was in practice the absolute ruler of Egypt."

Sir Evelyn, or Lord Cromer as he became, found Egypt on the edge of bankruptcy. He hauled it back from the brink, turned a huge deficit into a substantial surplus, started great irrigation projects and began the construction of the first Aswan Dam on the Nile. Foreign trade and the cotton crop doubled under his administration. From the sound base that he had built in Cairo, British control was extended right up the Nile Valley and throughout the Sudan.

Baring's rule was highly autocratic. Since he believed that it was part of Britain's destiny to contribute to the rehabilitation and westernization of Egypt, he gave short shrift to the country's own leaders. Instead, he turned most of the administration over to British officials, a procedure that may have helped to rescue Egypt from a financial mess in the short term, but did not encourage Egyptians to solve their own problems. Baring himself went about like a prince, flanked by soldiers, reviewing parades. In Cairo he was dubbed, in a rather clumsy French pun, "Le Grand Ours" – The Great Bear (-ing).

Whether he was actually doing what the British government intended for

1. Marquis of Lansdowne (Sir Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice) (Lord President of the Council)
2. Marquis of Tavistock (Francis Russell)
3. Viscount Goderich (later Earl of Ripon) (Secretary for the Colonies)
4. John, Duke of Bedford (John Russell) (former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland)
5. Earl Grey (Charles) (First Lord of the Treasury/Prime Minister)
6. Hon. William Cavendish
7. Charles Cumming Bruce
8. Lord (John) Russell (later Prime Minister)
9. Lord Charles Russell
10. Duke of Norfolk, Earl of Surrey
11. Charles Wood (later Chancellor of the Exchequer)
12. Edward J. Stanley
13. Viscount Morpeth (George William Frederick Howard)
14. Charles Poulett Thompson (later Governor-General of Canada)
15. Edward G. Stanley (later Prime Minister)
16. Lord John Russell (former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland)
17. Henry Labouchère (later Colonial Secretary)
18. Francis Thornhill Baring (later First Lord of the Admiralty)
19. William Congreve Russell
20. Viscount Castlereagh (Charles William Stewart-Vane)
21. Sir Henry Hardinge (later Governor-General of India)
22. Hon. William Bingham Baring (East India Company board of control)
23. Charles Russell
24. Henry Bingham Baring
25. Alexander Baring (later Envoy to U.S.A.)
26. Lord Ernest Bruce
27. Duke of Wellington (Arthur Wellesley) (General and statesman)

Egypt is quite another matter. His original orders in 1883 were to organize the British evacuation of Egypt, which politicians in London regarded as something of a burden. Far from arranging for the British to pull out, Cromer consolidated their position, so that by the time he retired in 1906 (with a pleasant handshake of £50,000 from Parliament), Egypt was part of the Empire in fact if not in name. More correctly, it was his personal empire within the Empire.

Faced with this oligarchy of Barings, Woods, Elgins, Lambtons and Greys spreading itself into every corner of the globe, it is a wonder that anyone else had a look in. Another family, however, a Tory one this time, holds the unique distinction of having four generations in direct line of descent, who were senior members of the Cabinet holding posts related to the fortunes of Empire. They are the Stanleys, the Earls of Derby. "No English family can show a longer record of public activity and public service than the Stanleys," wrote Randolph Churchill, in a biography of one of them. "None has exercised political power and influence for so many centuries."

The saga began with Thomas, 2nd Lord Stanley, who changed the course of English history in 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth. In the midst of the fight Thomas switched his allegiance from Richard III to Henry Tudor. Henry, now King, rewarded Thomas appropriately by creating him 1st Earl of Derby and granting him vast estates in Lancashire. The Derbys established their family seat at Knowsley, near Liverpool, and became the most influential family of the county. Over the centuries 14 members of the family served as Lord Mayor of Liverpool. They also indulged in a passion for horse racing. The 12th Earl of Derby, for instance, launched the Derby at Epsom in 1780.

The 14th Earl, however, Edward George Geoffrey Stanley (1799–1869), preferred jockeying for political power and brought the family once again into the arena of national politics. Eventually, he served three times as Prime Minister. To begin with he followed the traditional apprenticeship of so many young statesmen of

the age – Eton (where he won a prize for Latin verse), Christ Church, Oxford and then a "rotten borough" seat in the House of Commons purchased for him by his father. He entered Parliament in 1822 at the age of 23; by 1827 he was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. At 34 he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, grappling with the abolition of slavery.

The Earl completed a second term at the Colonial Office under Robert Peel from 1841 to 1845, when one of his concerns was the opium wars with China. His chief preoccupation, however, was not with the Empire, but with his own political advancement towards the premiership. In this he succeeded in 1852, although his government survived for only ten months. But Derby came back for a longer term as Prime Minister from February, 1858 to June, 1859. His second administration began shortly after the Indian Mutiny and is notable for the bill ending the powers of the East India Company and transferring them to the Crown. The man actually in charge of the India Bill was no less than the Prime Minister's son, Edward Henry Stanley (1826–93), later the 15th Earl of Derby. Edward served his father first as Colonial Secretary for three months, then as the last President of the Board of Control of the East India Company and as first Secretary of State for India, during his father's premiership. He was, in fact, in all his father's administrations: as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1852 and later as Foreign Secretary in the 14th Earl's third term at Downing Street from 1866 to 1868.

His father's death in 1869 did not check Edward's political career. The Stanleys were, after all, one of the most privileged of Tory families. Moreover, the new 15th Earl had married the widow of James Cecil, the 2nd Marquis of Salisbury, thus allying the Stanleys to the Cecils, who had long been to the Tories what the Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood was to the Whigs.

The 15th Earl was Disraeli's Foreign Secretary for four years from 1874 to 1878 and then, having deserted the Tories for the Liberals, Colonial Secretary under Gladstone from 1882 to 1885. His main contribution, during that return to the Colonial Office some 25 years after he first held office there, was to resist the annexation of more tropical colonies to the Empire. The reason he always gave was: "We don't want any more black men." When Gladstone's Liberal government fell in 1885, Earl Stanley simply handed over the seals of the Colonial Office to his younger brother Frederick (1841–1908), who was still with the Tories. After a while as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Frederick was appointed Governor-General of Canada and sailed off to Canada for five years.

While Frederick was away his eldest son, Edward George Villiers Stanley (1865–1948), then a young subaltern in the Grenadier Guards, decided he wanted to marry. His bride-to-be was Lady Alice Montagu, youngest daughter of the Duke of Manchester. But within such an aristocratic family, marriage was no simple matter. Were the bride and her own family suitable to be allied to a future Earl of Derby? (The 15th Earl had no children.) Since Edward's parents were in Canada, his uncle and aunt, Lord and Lady Derby, conducted the vetting themselves. The young lady and her father called upon them one day at their London home. Afterwards Lady Derby wrote a note to her nephew: "All right, dearest Edward. Greatly pleased and we got on admirably. Uncle Stanley came up and I could see in a moment all would be well. He says genuinely, 'I am very much pleased – it will do. She is what she should be and I like her expression and smile.'" Family honour was satisfied.

The young Edward, who became the 17th Earl of Derby in 1908, was destined to be as formidable a politician as his grandfather. He was one of the inner cabal of the Tory party for over 30 years. Although his associations with the Empire were not so direct as were those of some of his relatives, his career at the War Office during the First World War naturally involved him closely in imperial matters. In 1920, Lloyd George offered him the Colonial Office. Lord Derby wrote in reply: "The Colonial Office is one which would particularly appeal to me if only for hereditary reasons as my grandfather, uncle and father all held the post." But his county interests in Lancashire led him to decline the post.

His two sons made up for their father's refusal. The eldest, Edward, was Secretary of State for the Dominions in 1938, while the younger, Oliver, became Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1942, the fourth Stanley to serve there in 100 years. During that century the Stanleys between them were in command for a total of 12 years. No other single family, perhaps, had so personal a connection with the Empire's rise and fall.

In the maze of aristocratic family trees it is almost impossible to find someone at the high levels of Empire command who was not related to someone else. For example, Oliver Stanley, the last of his family at the Colonial Office, married Lady Helen Vane-Tempest-Stewart, daughter of the 7th Marquis of Londonderry. It was her great-great-grandfather, the 1st Marquis whose daughters had married two Viceroys of India and whose son, Viscount Castlereagh, had been Colonial Secretary. Again, Oliver Stanley's grandfather, the 16th Earl of Derby, had married Constance, the daughter of the 4th Earl of Clarendon who was Foreign Minister in Lord Aberdeen's government; her cousin, Edith, had married the 2nd Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India from 1876 to 1880. Lord Lytton himself was son of Edward Bulwer Lytton, who was Colonial Secretary from 1858 to 1859.

And so it goes on. The maze was unending. The 9th Earl of Dalhousie was Governor-General of Canada, and Commander-in-Chief in India; a generation later his son, the 10th Earl, became Governor-General of India in the crucial years just before the Mutiny in 1857. Just to complicate matters further, the 10th Earl's daughter, Susan, married the younger brother of the Earl of Mayo, who was assassinated in 1872 when he was Viceroy of India.

The bewildering complexity of relationships may indeed have inspired the Gilbert and Sullivan ditty from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which goes:

And so do his sisters, and his
cousins and his aunts!
His sisters and his cousins,
Whom he reckons up in dozens,
And his aunts!

SEEDBED OF THE IMPERIAL ELITE

To the men at the top of the imperial pyramid, social accomplishment was vital, for they had to represent the Crown in style. It was natural, therefore, that they should come from a class to which Eton, Oxford, Ascot and Henley were as much a part of life as Westminster or Whitehall.

Visitors to "Black" Ascot in June, 1910, take a well-bred stroll. Mourning for Edward VII was not allowed to interfere unduly with one of the year's main social events.

Nursery of Statesmen

For the rulers of Britain and her Empire, a public school and Oxford or Cambridge education was the first step to high office. By implanting an indestructible sense of tradition, discipline and group loyalty, it prepared students for their role as members of the élite that governed Britain and the most prestigious of her imperial possessions.

The public schools were, as a Royal Commission reported in 1864, "the chief nurseries of our statesmen; in them, and in schools modelled after them, men . . . destined for every profession and career, have been brought up on a footing of social equality, and have contracted the most enduring friendships, and some of the ruling habits of their lives; and they have had perhaps the largest share in moulding . . . the character of an English gentleman." More than 50 years later, one product of the system was still able to recall the shared and unquestioned assumption "that every boy would at one time or another be in such position as Viceroy of India and must be brought up with this end in view."

Governesses (above) keep a watchful eye on their charges in Kensington Gardens.

Etonians (right) buy buttonholes on June 4 to commemorate the birthday of George III.

Scholars of Eton gather for an "absence." This, explained the birch-wielding John Keate, who was headmaster from 1809 to 1834, "is a ceremony at which every boy is required to be present; as each name is called, the proprietor answers 'Here, Sir!' and any stray who cannot give a satisfactory excuse receives a flagellation."

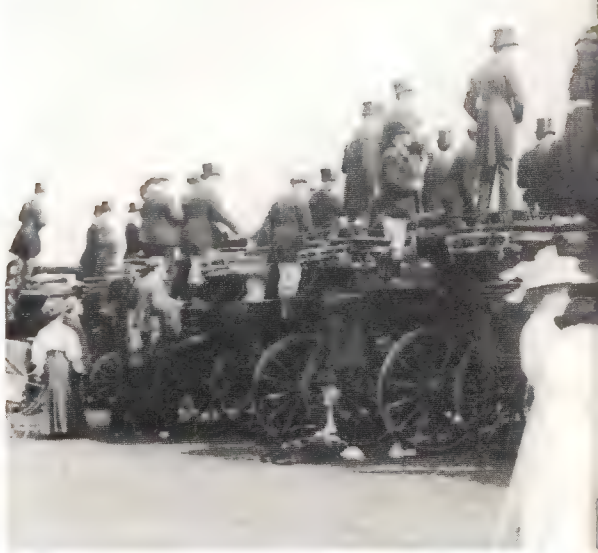
Prince Leopold (second from left), the Queen's youngest son, plays cards with some of his Oxford friends. "There is," declared one 19th-Century tutor, "an ambition, almost an energy, in profligate expenditure and display."

The Racing Set

Conditioned to take the pursuit of pleasure as much for granted as the pursuit of power, the young aristocrat was often torn between the two. Measured against the delights of Ascot, Henley and the Hunt, even the grandest imperial appointment could seem dull.

When Gladstone invited the future Duke of Devonshire to become Irish Secretary, that gentleman's first impulse was to refuse. "I cannot reconcile myself," he told the Prime Minister, "to giving up almost the whole year to official duties. . . . This to me, with all my friends and pursuits in England, would be almost banishment." Many resolved the dilemma by reproducing their favourite sporting pursuits overseas. Avid racing enthusiasts, for instance, built fine racecourses in Ireland, Rhodesia and Calcutta.

"Visitors arrive in thousands," wrote an observer of the Ascot scene in 1900, "the aristocracy and the well-to-do [below] . . . anxious parents with their daughters, the young debutante and the stately duchess."



A lady visitor is abandoned to forlorn isolation while the gentlemen crowd on to their coaches to watch events on the course.

Enthusiasts of all classes cheer on riders in the Prince of Wales Stakes in 1912.

In 1913, as always, Ascot meant a parade of female fashion as well as mere horse-racing.

The true hallmark of outstanding social distinction at Ascot was admission to the Royal Enclosure, pictured here in 1908.

The Rowing Set

For the aristocratic Viceroy, bearing the imperial burden many thousands of miles away from home, there could be no local substitute for the peculiarly English delights of Henley Regatta. Launched in 1839 by local citizens as an inducement to the trade of the area, the Regatta had developed by the end of the century into one of the most important, spectacular – and exclusive – events in the rowing and social calender. Strict rules banned any person "who is or has been by trade or employment for wages a mechanic, artisan, or labourer, or engaged in any menial duty."

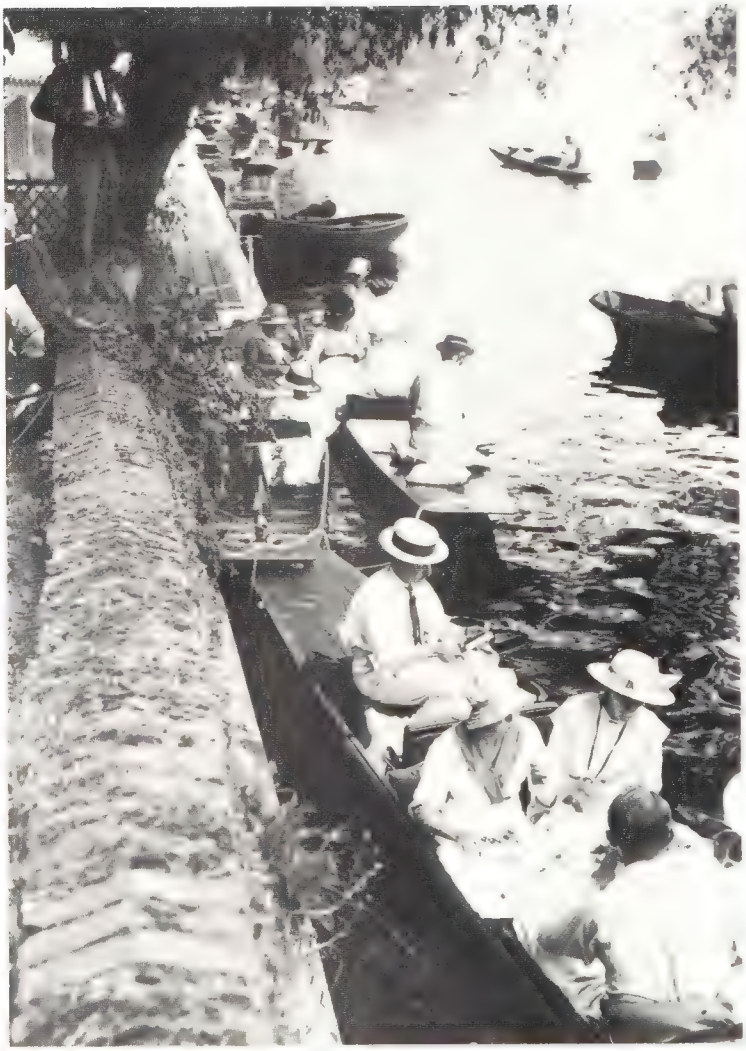
So opulent was the social junketing that, by 1889, the correspondent of *The Field* felt that the chief purpose of the occasion – rowing – had been completely lost sight of. "The curse of Henley," he wrote, "is . . . this ostentatious display of female finery, of flowers, of fruit, of wine, of viands." But to the British proconsuls, sweating it out in Cairo, Capetown and Calcutta, such arcadian delights constituted the dreams of lost youth.

Even a lady harpist fitted naturally into the Baroque splendours of Henley Regatta.

Upper-class visitors to Henley always managed to secure themselves a good view of events. He

A punt replete with entertainers in 18th-Century costume drifts past the onlookers.

hey are watched from the bank by some of the less privileged spectators.



Lunch is taken in the mellow shade of Phylis Court manor house.

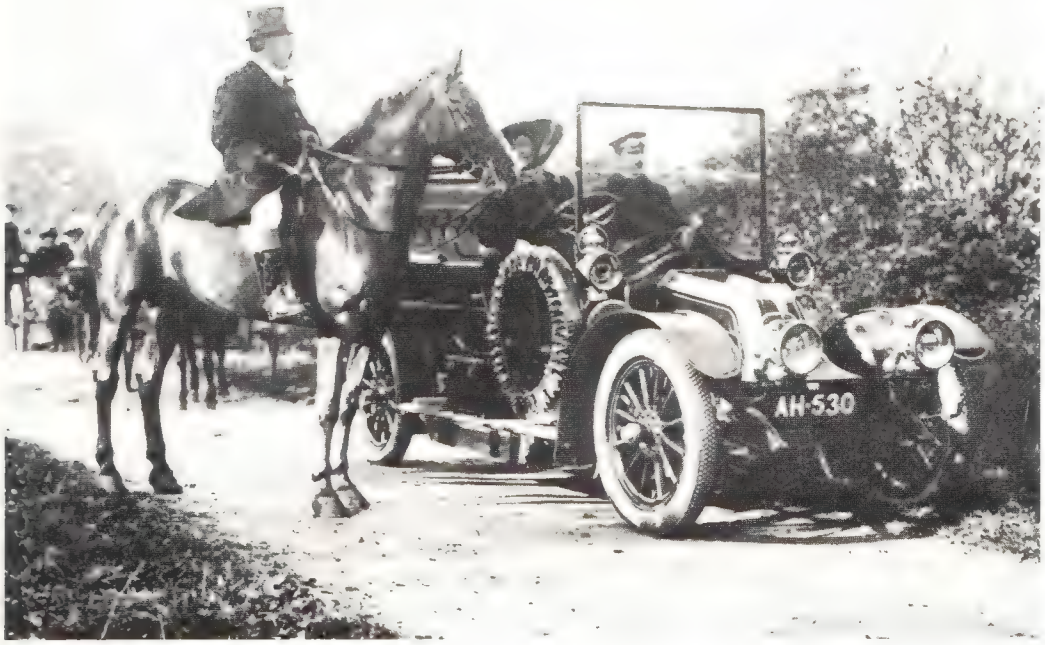
Oars are raised in respectful salute as the Royal Barge bearing King George V and Queen Mary arrives at the 1912 Regatta.

The Hunting Set

To the upper-class Englishman, hunting was a fierce and indispensable passion – one that had to be indulged in peace or war, in the shires of home or in the farthest reaches of Empire.

During the Boer War, General Kitchener encouraged his mounted infantry officers to form a pack of hounds. "We very soon," one of them recorded, "got together ten couple of hounds! There were pointers, retrievers, poodles, terriers, Kaffir dogs, and mongrels of all sorts! . . . Later on, when His Majesty's Buckhounds were discontinued, King Edward VII sent twelve couple of them out to South Africa. . . . Fancy the remains of the historic pack, which hunted the country round Windsor, Ascot, Slough, Maidenhead, Wokingham, etc., etc., ending their days hunting the country round Pretoria!" Even stranger, no doubt, was the sight of pink-clad Boer devotees yelling "Tally-Ho!"

The Montreal Hunt, founded by British officers in 1826, flourished in the heart of French Canada, and under the Raj the traditional British Hunt was imported into many parts of the Indian Empire. By the end of the 19th Century one of the smartest hunts was to be found in Gibraltar. On one occasion it went over the Straits, to Tangier, "where a wolf gave an excellent run of over 40 minutes and a distance of nine miles."



A leading member of the Atherstone Hunt describes an exciting day's proceedings to an elegant and attractive female motorist.

Watched by a deferential group of villagers, members of the Bicester Hunt make their leisurely way across an Oxfordshire field.

The Bicester Hunt, seen here in full cry, provided the wealthy young undergraduates of nearby Oxford with an opportunity for action and excitement.

A formidable member of the Cottesmore Hunt chats about the day's sport to a friend.

Members of the Earl Fitzwilliam Hunt brace themselves with some suitable refreshment.

III. The Last of the Line

Although the Empire was a family affair for the narrow aristocratic circle that held the highest offices, countless middle-class families served tirelessly in the Empire's causes for generation after generation. Indeed, they were really the people, either in the Army or the civil service, who made it work on a day-to-day basis. And their dedication to the Empire went far beyond that of the aristocrats; they, after all, had to live their whole lives abroad instead of spending three or four years away from country mansions.

No family was worked harder in India, for instance, than that of a fine old Irish soldier, Colonel Alexander Lawrence. He served with the 77th Regiment in India and five of his six sons joined the East India Company. Three of them, George, Henry and John, became formidable soldiers and administrators. They were, according to one biographer, "rugged, simple, headstrong, unyielding men with firm notions of duty." The first reaction of many Governor-Generals when faced with rebellion in a province was to send for one of the Lawrences. They spoke fluent Hindustani and knew India and its people far more intimately than any of the Governor-Generals who came flitting in and out of the country for only short periods.

George Lawrence first made a name for himself in the Afghan Wars of the late 1830s and later worked as the political agent in charge of Peshawar in the Punjab. In 1857 he took over from his brother Henry (perhaps the most brilliant of the three), as chief agent for the Rajputana states just before the outbreak of the Mutiny. He prevented any serious outbreak there during the crisis and was rewarded with promotion to Major-General. But it was Henry and John Lawrence who really excelled themselves during the Mutiny; in fact, they are widely credited with the chief responsibility for checking the spread of the uprising and saving India from total chaos and anarchy.

When the Mutiny broke out John was in command in Lahore as Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. He quickly disarmed and disbanded most of the sepoy regiments in the area to prevent them joining the uprising. His officers formed a small mobile column to rush to any trouble spot. Lawrence reminded them that, since Clive had been the victor at Plassey with a mere 1,200 men against 40,000, they had nothing to worry about. Actually, Lawrence's fearsome reputation in the Punjab helped maintain the peace; the local princes and maharajahs thought it wiser to hold to their treaties with the British then to face an irate John Lawrence.

Henry Lawrence, in command at Lucknow, was less fortunate. With the city under siege Lawrence turned the Residency into a small fortress and determined to hold out until help arrived. During the action he was badly wounded but urged his officers never to surrender. He died just two weeks before the relief column got through. He requested that the epitaph on his grave should read simply: "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty."

What he did not know when he died was that three weeks earlier in England, the Cabinet had decided that he should be appointed acting Governor-General of India if Governor-General Lord Canning was killed or seriously incapacitated during the fighting.

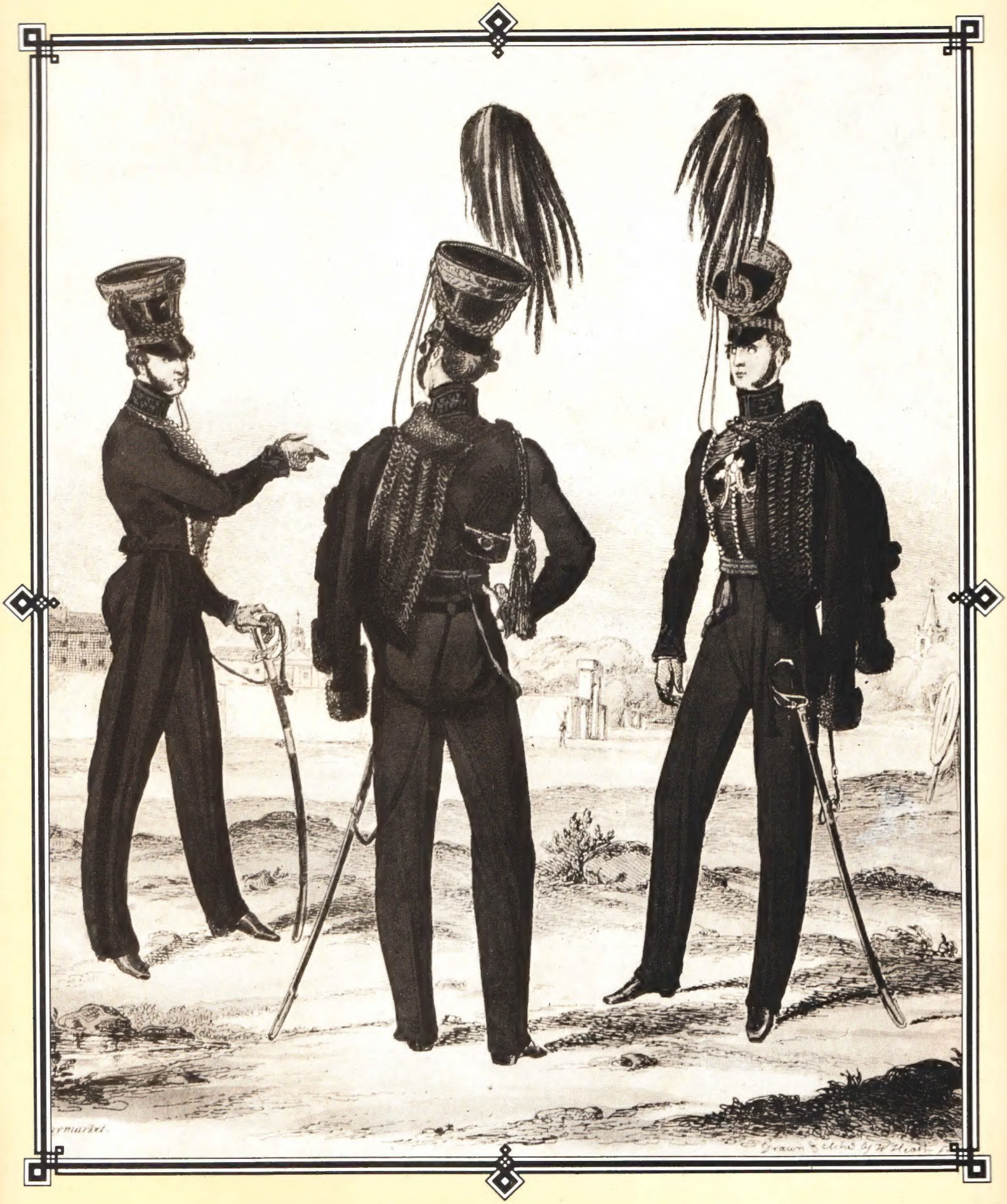
To the family, however, there came some consolation seven years later. His brother John, now Lord Lawrence, was appointed Viceroy of India; he was one of only three rulers of India not to come from an aristocratic background. A sure tribute to a conscientious and remarkable family.

The most outstanding example of dynastic rule in imperial history is, of course, that of the Brookes – the White Rajahs of Sarawak. This dynasty was first established when a young Englishman, James Brooke, intrigued by what he had read of Raffles's discoveries in Borneo, went out to look for himself in 1840. He came upon the little Sultanate of Sarawak, on the northern shores of Borneo, to find the country in chaos. The local Sultan enlisted his aid in subduing a rebellion and then, when Brooke prepared to leave, asked him in despair to stay on to run the unruly place.

He invested Brooke with all the government and trade of the country and granted him the title of Rajah in November, 1841. For almost precisely a century thereafter the Brookes ruled Sarawak as absolute though benevolent dictators. Under the second Rajah, Charles Brooke (actually a nephew of James, who changed his name from Johnson to Brooke), who ruled for almost half a century, from 1868 until 1917, the framework of the modern Sarawak was created. The Brookes themselves became immensely wealthy in the process through the lucrative exports of the island's gold and rubber.

Their rule ended abruptly in December, 1941, when the Japanese overran the country, just four months after the centenary celebrations at which the third Rajah, Vyner Brooke, had divested himself of his supreme authority and proposed a new constitution. After the war the Rajah, realizing that the era of personal empires was over, ceded the territory formally to Britain. (For the full story of the Brookes in Sarawak, see the chapter on the *Buccaneers of the East* in Volume II of this history.)

So the Brookes bowed out of Sarawak in 1946. The following year India was granted full independence. The Empire was vanishing fast. But it is remarkable how many of the old families were in at the death. Three of the last Viceroys of India, for instance, were descendants of previous Viceroys or Secretaries of State for India. Naturally, the two great families, the Stanleys and the Greys, were there. Oliver Stanley was at the Colonial Office until 1945. Lord Avon (Anthony Eden), whose abortive Suez adventure drummed home that the gunboat diplomacy of the Empire was totally outdated, and Sir Alec Douglas-Home, still struggling today for a Rhodesian settlement, are both descended directly from the Grey-Lambton clan. In 1960 Harold Macmillan gave formal notice to the world that Britain's imperial dream was at an end. In a famous speech to the white rulers in Cape Town, the British Prime Minister spoke of the awakening national consciousness of colonial peoples. "The wind of change," he proclaimed, "is blowing through [Africa]." Appropriately, Macmillan was married to none other than Lady Dorothy Cavendish, daughter of the Duke of Devonshire. He thus ensured that the Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood was in at the finish.



60th Duke of York's Own Rifle Corps, 1827